

Tourism E-news

Tennessee Department of Tourist Development



The stage is set for you!

E-News V05.1

TTR Hosts 2005 Day on the Hill April 6

Governor Phil Bredesen will address Tennessee's tourism industry April 6 during the Tennessee Tourism Roundtable's 2005 Day on the Hill luncheon.

The luncheon will be held at the Sheraton Downtown Nashville at 623 Union Street. Registration and seating for the event begins at 11:30 a.m. with the luncheon starting at noon. The event typically draws some 350 industry professionals from around the state.

Commissioner Susan Whitaker will address the group, discussing the department's test launch in 2004 of the new advertising campaign, *Tennessee – The Stage Is Set For You!* Whitaker will unveil new research regarding the test campaign's success. In addition, Whitaker will talk about what the governor's proposed one-time appropriation of \$4.5 million to launch the new campaign would mean to the state's brand and marketing efforts.

TTR is offering several ticket and sponsorship options, which includes sponsoring a table at the luncheon with a particular legislator for \$300. The cost includes four (4) tickets at your reserved table, special recognition during the event and your business or organization will be featured on all subsequent "Day on the Hill" collateral materials. The business or organization also will be featured on the Tennessee Tourism Roundtable Web site and will include links to the sponsoring company's Web site. Online registration for table sponsorships by visiting www.tntourismroundtable.com. For more information, contact TTR at 423-648-2121.

Individual online registration is also available for \$60.

The Tennessee Tourism Roundtable (TTR) was created to unite the state's travel, tourism and allied industries for the enhancement, promotion and benefit of Tennessee's tourism and travel opportunities. The organization provides a unified voice for the tourism industry within Tennessee on legislative issues and concerns. ■

TDTD Goes Before Legislature for Budget Hearings

Commissioner Susan Whitaker went before the House Finance Committee and the Senate Environment, Conservation and Tourism Committee in the last two weeks for hearings on the department's proposed 2005-2006 budget.

As part of the hearings, Whitaker addressed Governor Phil Bredesen's one-time appropriation of \$4.5 million to launch the state's new advertising campaign, *Tennessee – The Stage Is Set For You!* At this time, Tennessee ranks 12th in the nation in visitations with 42.8 million visitors in 2003, but 21st in marketing and advertising spending.

Unveiled in April 2004, the new branding campaign was tested during the fall and summer in Atlanta, Little Rock, St. Louis, Birmingham, Greenville-Sparta-Asheville, Louisville, Lexington, Huntsville, and Cincinnati.

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TTR 2005 Tourism Day on the Hill Luncheon

11:30 p.m. Registration
12 p.m. Luncheon

Speakers:

Governor Phil Bredesen
Commissioner Susan Whitaker
Dave Perella, TTR

For more information and to make reservations:

www.tntourismroundtable.com or
423-648-2121



Tennessee
- The Stage Is Set
For You! print advertising
campaign featuring Dolly Parton.

Memphis Hosts Travel South

Memphis and the state of Tennessee hosted more than 700 travel industry professionals February 13-16 for Travel South USA Showcase 2005.

Travel South USA, the nation's oldest and largest regional marketing organization, celebrated 40 years of promoting tourism in the south. Showcase, created in 1983, is the nation's first and foremost regional, domestic computerized marketplace exclusively for Southern suppliers to meet one on one with North American travel buyers.

More than 700 delegates represented 305 supplier companies, 155 travel buyers from 35 states and three foreign countries, travel and consumer media outlets, and 55 travel service providers such as online travel companies and advertising media. Representing the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development was Commissioner Susan Whitaker, assistant commissioner Phyllis Qualls-Brooks, director of sales Lee Curtis, communications director Keith Britt, Middle Tennessee regional manager Derrick Smith, and East Tennessee regional manager Nicky Reynolds.



Nicky Reynolds and Lee Curtis

The four-day event delivered an estimated \$847,000 in direct economic impact to the city of Memphis.

"We are very happy with the turnout at Showcase this year, both in the quantity and the quality of the delegates present," said Liz Bittner, Travel South USA. "It is always exciting to see this many travel professionals in one place for one purpose – increasing travel to the south."

During Showcase 2005, Travel South USA announced its new marketing initiatives directed toward the Canadian market. Travel South USA has adopted a bright, creative new logo and a tagline that calls travelers to "Discover the Southern Way!" A consumer Web site is under development and will be accompanied by a print insert in Canadian newspapers and magazines and a sales mission to Toronto in the fall.

"Travel South was a great success," said Commissioner Whitaker. "As always, Memphis did a great job of hosting such a large event, and I want to thank each member of our staff for their hard work in being the state host."

"Not only were we able to give all of these travel buyers a first-hand look at Memphis during the convention, but on the sales floor, we were able to sell the entire state as a great destination." ■

TDTD Goes Before Legislature for Budget Hearings

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The campaign features entertainment legends and Tennessee natives Dolly Parton and Isaac Hayes in television and radio commercials as well as print advertisements. The campaign's message is rooted in the concept that Tennessee is already famous for its popular music venues, historical sites and beautiful scenery, and is itself the perfect stage for fantastic vacation experiences.

Whitaker told legislators that the campaign works and generated impressive results in the test markets.

"The inquiries in the test markets doubled or increased by 2.5 after the television spots ran. In fact, inquiries from the Atlanta market tripled," Whitaker said during the hearings. "The department will use the \$4.5 million one-time appropriation for a power launch of the campaign. This means expanding the key markets from nine to fourteen and putting in place larger, more frequent buys to generate the results to keep the industry growing."

Whitaker explained that advertising funding can have an immediate effect on the state's economy. Longwoods International has completed preliminary research report on the department's \$1.5 million test launch in 2004, which demonstrated success.

"The report shows that every dollar spent by the state on advertising the new campaign generated \$16.94 in sales tax revenue - \$10.56 for the state and \$6.38 for local communities," Whitaker said. "This is a 19 percent increase from the \$14.20 in sales tax revenue generated from every dollar spent by the state in 2003."

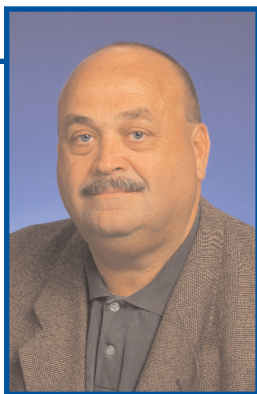
The department's budget was approved by the Senate Environment, Conservation and Tourism Committee and sent to the Senate Finance Committee. The commissioner presented the budget and answered questions before the House Finance Committee, and the budget is still in committee.

"Funding economic development, which includes tourism, is vital. Tourism is an economic engine that generates tax revenue for important services such as health care and education, which by their very nature are not self-funding," Whitaker said. "The fuel to keep the tourism economic engine running is marketing, and without that funding the engine will sputter and not generate revenue." ■

Ray Page Retires

Ray Page, director of Welcome Centers for the department, retires March 23. Page worked for many years as Middle Tennessee regional manager of welcome centers before his appointment as director in 1997 under Commissioner John Wade.

Page's state career spans 30 years, serving in the departments of General Services and Safety before moving to Tourist Development.



"I began as a GS procurement officer. My father and brother were state troopers, so coming to work for Tennessee seemed the natural thing to do," Page said. "The biggest influence in my career was the former director, Durrell Roberts. He was the most knowledgeable tourism person I have ever known in the state or the industry. I've strived to live up to Durrell's ideals, which included remembering people come first, and that we are representing Tennessee government and the taxpayers."

Page said that he is very proud of the high level of cleanliness and service the department has achieved at all thirteen Tennessee welcome centers. "Our facilities are the first impression visitors have of our state," Page said. "Many people do not realize the amount of work and activity generated at the centers as we greet the traveling public and assist them 365 days a year."

Commissioner Susan Whitaker said that Page's experience and leadership will be missed. "I am certain he leaves behind a staff trained to serve with the same high ideals and commitment he has exemplified over the years," Whitaker said.

When asked how he would spend the first day of retirement, Page said with a broad smile, "On a Tennessee golf course with T-time at 8:30 a.m." ■

Travel Writers Head to Middle East Tennessee

More than 20 national and international travel writers will be visiting the Middle East Tennessee region April 18-22 and the Chattanooga area April 22-24.

The department, which hosts the writers as part of its media tours coordinated by Geiger & Associates, has coordinated a variety of interest tracks for the media including history, arts & crafts, fishing, fly-fishing, golf, family entertainment, off road adventures (motorcycles, mountain bikes, horseback riding and hiking), birdwatching, canoeing, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and whitewater rafting.

During the last 12 months, the department has hosted media tours in the Upper Cumberland, West Tennessee, Middle Tennessee and now Middle East Tennessee. ■

Marty Marbry Named West Tennessee Manager

Marty Marbry joined the department March 14 as the West Tennessee public relations and marketing manager. Marbry brings to the job an enthusiasm for her native region and a wide array of destination marketing experience. Marbry recently served for two years as director of marketing and group sales for the Peabody Place Historic District in Memphis and has held several marketing and event planning positions with attractions and agencies in West Tennessee.

Marbry's also served as a volunteer with major regional organizations such as Travel South, ITB Berlin (the world's largest travel trade show) and PowWow, while most recently working with the dine-around at the Travel South Conference in Memphis.

Marbry also was with Wolfchase Galleria from its opening and worked there for six years, managing a very successful grand opening marketing plan. Marbry was among the first of a group of eleven marketing directors to establish the importance of retail tourism for the Shop America Alliance, a national organization that develops tourism promotional opportunities for shopping centers, retailers and restaurants.

"I'm excited to fold what I know into assisting tourism organizations and attractions all across West Tennessee in highlighting their assets to the consumer and group travel markets," said Marbry. "Right now, many travelers are looking for historic Main Street and back roads destinations, and the media is always looking for a new story. I believe there's plenty of wonderful attractions and events to promote in West Tennessee."

Marbry will maintain an office in Jackson, Tennessee in the new state building that is part of the old complex. The office will open May 2. Until then, she'll begin visiting all of the counties in the West Tennessee region. Contact Marbry by email at Marty.Marbry@state.tn.us or at the following phone numbers: 731-426-0888 (office) and 731-225-0053 (cell). ■

Tourism E-news

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